



Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2018-19
Wednesday, 23 May 2018
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.03am until 10.38pm.

The committee called:

- agencies of the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio, including Dairy Australia, Landcare Australia, Meat and Livestock Australia, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Horticulture Innovation Australia, Plant Health Australia, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and corporate matters within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Due to the committee running behind schedule, the committee released the Australian Maritime Safety Authority without giving evidence.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

- upcoming elections for the Dairy Australia Board, and the geographical representation of current Board members;
- industry's feedback to Meat and Livestock Australia regarding its 2030 carbon neutral target;
- size of Australia's cattle herd and future projections regarding a rebuilt herd size;
- research into Australian consumer demand for meat, including trends in vegetarianism and lab-grown proteins;
- update on the Branhaven/Cargill patent case;
- cost of rebadging the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation as AgriFutures, including a breakdown of costs by categories (such as market research, media releases, signage and letter heads, legal costs etc.);
- staffing levels of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), as well as a discussion of survey results indicating the number of staff intending to relocate to Armidale or pursue teleworking;
- prospective establishment of an APVMA Board, including the reasons for the establishment and how the board will be funded; and
- potential release of the carp herpesvirus, including how the National Carp Control Plan Program is engaging with a range of evidence regarding the impact of the virus, and the timeline for the provision of the Plan to government.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Thursday, 24 May in Committee Room 2R1.